

be generated from their activity back to them in their communities than would otherwise be the case if they were—we waited for traditional things to develop. And you know, I think this is very important.

One of the things that I have learned because I've had the chance to be President and go to so many countries and listen to so many people is that most of us who get where we are are there in part by accident, and there is somebody else with a heck of a lot of talent somewhere else that never even gets noticed.

And I think it's very, very important that we think of how we can use our money and organizational and media access capacities to bring the largest number of people possible to the attention of the larger world, because I think that has a very important diplomatic impact. I think that the more people from otherwise isolated groups and cultures are in contact in a positive way with the rest of the world, the less likely we are to have debilitating wars and conflicts and isolation. So that's something I want to think some more about.

I wonder if any of you on the panel or maybe Congressman Leach, who is a sponsor of this bill, or Senator Leahy, if any of you have any specific—specific points you want to make about things we ought to be doing here before we wrap up this section? Anybody else? Wole?

[Wole Soyinka, recipient, 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature, made brief remarks. The discussion then continued.]

*The President.* Maybe I will just close by following up on what you said, Wole. I believe that this should definitely be a two-way street; we ought to be putting out and taking in here. And I don't have much else to say. I never learn anything when I'm talking, only when I'm listening. [Laughter] Once in a great while when you're talking, you learn something because you didn't really know what you thought until you brought it out, but not very—[laughter].

I want to thank all of you for being here. This is quite a luminous group we have in the White House today, and we might have had any number of you also on this panel. And so I want to urge you to please fully participate in the remainder of events. Please make the most of it and try to come out of this with as many specific areas of concern as you can.

I thank His Highness, the Aga Khan, for starting out, because he said, "Look, here are three things you need to really work at, and I think we need to be thinking about this." And I will do my best to put it in the position to be acted upon in the weeks and months ahead. And again I want to thank Senator Leahy and Representative Leach for being here, because they're—along with Senator Hillary—are our sort of lines of continuity to the future American Government. [Laughter]

But this was very interesting to me and quite moving, and I think we ought to close by giving our panelists another hand. [Applause]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to actor John Lithgow; President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic; Charles A. Ansbacher, principal guest conductor of the Sarajevo Philharmonic and conductor laureate of the Colorado Springs Orchestra; Stella Obasanjo, wife of President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria; Sam-Ang Sam, musician, and his wife, Chan Moly Sam, dancer, Apsara Ensemble; Elizabeth Rohatyn, co-founder, French Regional and American Museum Exchange; and violinist Mark O'Connor. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of First Lady Hillary Clinton, Secretary Albright, Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, Mr. Soyinka, Ms. Dove, Mr. Ma, Ms. Spero, and Minister of Culture Giovanna Melandri of Italy.

## Remarks at an "Invitation to the White House" Reception November 28, 2000

Thank you very much, and good evening. Hillary and I are delighted to welcome all of you here, and I want to especially thank Carter

Brown and Carl Anthony, who I will recognize shortly. I also want to thank Neil Horstman, the White House Historical Association, and the

White House Curator, Betty Monkman, for their work to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the White House; and to recognize the members of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House for the renovation and the refurbishment which they have made possible.

I hope that you've all had the opportunity to go on the short tour just before we started—I understand you have—and to see again what an extraordinary place the American people's house really is.

For two centuries now, the American people have looked at the White House as a symbol of our Nation's leadership, strength, and continuity; also a symbol of progress and change. The White House wears its history proudly but is forever growing and changing, along with America. If you think about the history of this room, it's illustrative.

The East Room began life as Abigail Adams' laundry room when she moved into the half-finished house in 1801. A few years later, Thomas Jefferson laid out maps and books with Meriwether Lewis to plot the expedition that forever changed the map of America. In this room, Abraham Lincoln lay in state. In this room, a century later, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act.

Hillary and I have had our own opportunities to add to the history of this room, for here we hosted the state dinner for Nelson Mandela, the first President of a free, multiracial South Africa. Appropriately, as we enter the new century, the East Room also hosted the first-ever White House cybercast. And just today we held here another in a series of White House conferences, this one on culture and diplomacy. The others have ranged in topics from the new economy to early childhood development in the brain.

Hillary has led the way in meeting our responsibility during these years to preserve and enhance the White House and its collections. As over 1 ½ million people come here every year, Hillary has taken extraordinary steps to ensure that they experience the best of our past and the promise of our shared future.

She personally oversaw the restoration of several of the public rooms and helped to build and diversify the collection of American art. She

established the beautiful sculpture garden in the Jackie Kennedy Garden downstairs and worked with the White House Historical Association to raise a lasting endowment to preserve the White House and its collections. And as we now know, she somehow found the time to chronicle our lives here and how the White House works and makes our lives possible in "An Invitation to the White House."

I hope her book will give millions of our fellow Americans who may never come here a better sense of what is so special about the house, what history tells us about the strength of our Nation, and about the remarkable people who actually make this place work, day-in and day-out, year-in and year-out.

The history of this house is the history of brave men and women, from John and Abigail Adams and the men and women who served them, down to the present day. As the White House enters its third century, I hope that all of those who come after us will find, as Hillary and I have, enormous sustenance and strength in the power of this great place.

I must say, it has been an honor to live here, and I can honestly say that there is never a time when the helicopter lands on the South Lawn that I still don't feel the thrill of just being here, of being able to walk in this place, visit the rooms, and relive, as I have so often, the history of our country and what happened in various places in this grand old house. So I thank you all for that.

Now let me welcome J. Carter Brown, who has been a valued artistic adviser to us and, indeed, to every First Family since the Kennedy administration.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to J. Carter Brown, chairman, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts; historian Carl Anthony; and Neil Horstman, executive vice president, White House Historical Association. The First Lady's book, entitled "An Invitation to the White House: At Home With History," was published by Simon and Schuster. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.